



Queensland Rugby Football League Limited

A.B.N. 65 009 878 013

Locked Bag 3000, Paddington Qld 4064
Suncorp Stadium
Cnr Castlemaine & Chippendall Streets,
Milton Qld 4064

Telephone: 07 3367 6000
Facsimile: 07 3367 3464
Email: rugbyleague@qrl.com.au
Website: www.qrl.com.au

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir/Madam,

We wish to make a submission to the Inquiry into recent ABC programming decisions. We seek to address point (f) in the Terms of Reference:

- *The future potential implications of these cuts on ABC television's capacity to broadcast state league football and rugby*

The Queensland Rugby League is extremely concerned about the potential demise of the ABC's weekly coverage of the Queensland Cup Competition. The ABC has a long and proud association with Rugby League in Queensland, stretching right back to the glory days of the Brisbane Rugby League prior to 1988 and the birth of the Queensland-based NRL Clubs.

In more recent times, the ABC cameras have been on hand every weekend to bring viewers all the excitement and drama from the Queensland Cup match-of-the-round. This excellent coverage has played an integral part in the growth of a Competition that is widely recognised as the best Rugby League Competition outside of the National Rugby League.

A viable and progressive Queensland Cup is crucial to the future of the code. The Queensland Cup is a true Statewide Competition featuring regional teams from Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton, Ipswich and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts as well as the traditional Brisbane Clubs like the Redcliffe Dolphins, Easts Tigers, Souths Logan Magpies and Norths Devils.

Our records show that a staggering 65 Queensland State of Origin representatives have at one stage or another played in the Queensland Cup. This figure will continue to grow as the popular Statewide Competition goes from strength to strength.



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However, it must be said that this future growth would be jeopardised without the support of the ABC as a valued partner. Ratings from the broadcasts have been consistently strong and quite frankly many sports fans would be lost without their weekend "fix" of local Rugby League on Saturdays at 2pm. The biggest impact would be felt by outback and regional communities, many of whom don't have access to mainstream networks.

Steve Ricketts, a highly-respected Rugby League writer with the The Courier-Mail, perhaps best sums it up in his weekly column:

"The news that ABC television might not continue to cover the Intrust Super Cup in 2012 strikes at the heart of all true fans of rugby league. There is life outside the NRL, and there are many people who look forward to the live ISC matches just as much as Channel 9 or Fox Sports coverage of the elite level."

Most importantly, the ABC's coverage of the Statewide Competition provides a great social platform. Many conversations in the family home or within the office walls generate from the weekly ABC match of the round as family and friends get together to watch their team. Quite often it is their son, brother, neighbour or local tradesman who is in the middle of the action.

This television coverage – provided free of charge to Fox Sports – provides valuable exposure and brings recognition to the Clubs and participants in an increasingly competitive sporting and commercial market. The Queensland Rugby League has an outstanding relationship with the ABC and would like the partnership to continue well into the future. The game and the people deserve it.

Yours sincerely

Robert Moore

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER